

Things I Learned From My Pastor

Biblical Principles of Ministry as Taught
By Pastor Chuck Smith, Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa

**By
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Introduction

The principles of ministry, which follow, are not at all original with me. In fact, 100% of what follows I was taught by my pastor, Chuck Smith, the pastor of Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, California and Bible teacher on the Word for Today radio series. Pastor Chuck has been my pastor for over twenty years. Many years ago, he took me, along with many other misplaced young men, under his wing, and taught us by example how to be shepherds of God's people. All that I have done is pull together what he taught us in one outline.

In my experience as a pastor over the last two decades, it has become clear to me that those ministries, which faithfully function in accordance with these principles, are blessed and prosper spiritually, and those which are not being blessed are usually lacking in at least one or more of these areas.

These principles are not listed in any particular order – they are all important and Scriptural. They are offered as a blessing to God's people in general, and to His pastors in particular.

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1. It is Not By Might, Nor By Power, but By My Spirit Says the Lord of Hosts (Zech. 4:6)

It is imperative that we as pastors rely on the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit in our ministries. Perhaps one reason why the church has turned to secular humanistic psychology with such enthusiasm is because it lacks the supernatural power of God.

The church is God's. Jesus said "I will build my church..." (The personal pronouns are emphatic in the Greek). It is His work, the problems are His problems, and the people are His people. We are not to be building our personal kingdoms; we are to be flowing with Him.

To do so, we must seek His will for the ministry daily, confess our personal inability, and rest on His strength. How easy it is to fall into the trap of relying on self, especially in areas that are routine.

Christian bookstores, seminaries, and denominations are filled with programs that propose to teach us how to raise money, how to attract new folks, how to administrate, how to counsel those in need, how to evangelize, etc. etc. But one key to the success of Calvary Chapel is that Pastor Chuck and those who have learned from him ignore all that. We are not interested in spiritual "how to" books and seminars, instead we seek the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. We look to Him each day in prayer, we search His Word, and there we find direction for the ministry for today. He gives us ideas and plans; He instills vision that is breathed by His life.

So many of the programs around us are adopted from the world. Evangelism programs are based on worldly sales techniques, administrative courses come from business management principles, counseling techniques come from secular psychology, the "science of church growth" is based on demographics and marketing strategy. And of course, much of it works in the sense that you can build a church that way. The problem is that it's not the Lord's church, so if you build it, you will have to sustain and maintain it.

Laying all of that aside is hard on the flesh, but in the long run much easier. Rather than striving to build and sustain, we can let God do His work. It takes all the worry out of ministry. It's His work; I can just relax and enjoy watching what He'll do. My responsibility is simply to seek His face, rely on His Spirit, and obey Him.

When we do rely on Him, all the glory and honor goes to God. And, we must be very careful to give Him the credit for what He does; and, conversely, we must be careful not to blame Him for what we do. God will not share His glory with any person; He knows we cannot handle it. All praise and glory must go to the

Master Builder, the Chief Cornerstone, and the Head of the Body, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Servant of the Lord Must Not Strive (II Tim. 2:24)

If you're building your kingdom, you'll find the work strenuous. But if you can relax, rely on the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, with all of His gifts and glory, you'll find ministry to be delightful. You may get tired in the work, but never of it. "Burn out" is unthinkable if we're resting in Jesus.

As Pastor Chuck says, "God wants inspiration, not perspiration." If we seek to "pump up" a ministry with programs, hyped up "worship", or charged up emotionalism, we'll not only be exhausted, but we'll have to strive to maintain what we built. True inspiration comes from a heart yielded fully to God, a life in a state of being continually filled with the Holy Spirit, "speaking to ourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs".

Pastor Chuck loves to take ventures of faith, like Jonathan of old. He loves to just step out and see if God wants to do something. If He doesn't desire to move in that way, that's fine, you withdraw and move on. But sometimes, God will move mightily, He was just waiting for someone to step out of the boat.

When you recognize that God is in charge, and Jesus is building His own church (without our help if need be), you can relax, not strive, not push, and not worry. Sometimes it will become obvious through the lack of fruit that God's not in a particular venture. If so, fine, if God's not in it, let it go. That's one reason why each part of Pastor Chuck's ministry is financially independent. That way you're not taking away from something God is blessing to prop up something He's not. All of our churches and ministries don't have to be identical; maybe God doesn't want a bookstore here or a touring music ministry there. Let God be God. Go with the flow.

3. Blessed Are the Flexible For They Shall Not Be Broken. (See Acts 18:9-11)

This third principle is a necessity if you're adhering to the first two. In fact, you can't do the first two without being flexible. Lack of flexibility is why we're often attracted to pre-packaged programs; we like our lives to be regimented, scheduled, so we know what to do and when. It drives our flesh crazy to not have a five-year plan.

Any ministry associated with Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa must be flexible, “instant in season and out”, and ready to be used of God at any time in any way. If you’re not flexible, you’ll break.

In ministry, there are no interruptions, just opportunities to minister the love of God to others. If our lives are guided by the Holy Spirit, we need to be open to hearing and obeying His voice as He speaks to us from His Word.

It’s not necessarily wrong to have a schedule, only to be a slave to it. Perhaps God has other plans. I planned to write letters today and tie up administrative details, but maybe God’s plan for me was to visit in the hospital or share Christ with the letter carrier. Walking in the Spirit implies an openness to have one’s schedule rearranged. Everything God wants done will get done.

Of course, we need to be diligent, good stewards over our time, well organized. But simultaneously, we must be flexible, able to accept change, willing to go wherever the Lord leads. In a big ministry that God is blessing, you may be called on at a moment’s notice to teach a Bible study, pray with someone, counsel another, or fix the air conditioner.

The flexible never break.

4. Where God Guides, He Provides (See Phil. 4:6,12,19)

There is never any good reason to beg for or manipulate folks into increasing their financial commitment to the Church. Usually when we do so it is because we are seeking to sustain or build something of our own making. Where God guides, He provides. If He’s not providing, maybe He’s not guiding.

So many ministries have been discredited by pastors and evangelists putting the squeeze on people to give. The opposite happens at Calvary Chapel. A while back, a woman persuaded her wealthy husband to come with her to a Thanksgiving service at Big Calvary. Pastor Chuck shared about how blessed we all were materially. “So, here comes the pitch for money”, the man thought. But then Pastor Chuck went on to share that he couldn’t enjoy his family Thanksgiving if he knew anyone there was in want, so he encouraged anyone in need to contact the church office for a free turkey. The rich man was blown away; in fact, he was saved because he’d never seen a church that didn’t beg for his money.

God doesn’t need your money. He’s not poor. The kingdom of God is not teetering on the edge of bankruptcy.

But, you protest, the people need to learn Biblical principles of giving so they can be blessed. Granted. So teach those principles when you naturally get to them in the course of a verse by verse study of the Minor Prophets or Paul's Epistles, not as a special message because your budget is low. Is our motive in teaching giving really to bless the folks (if so, go for it), or is it rather to raise money? We are instructed in the Bible to be "blameless", the word means of pure motive, not sinless.

It is equally important not to ignore finances. We are to not be "slothful in business" (Rom. 12:11, KJV). Frugality, good stewardship, being careful with every penny of God's money is vital. As a pastor, I never wanted to know who gave what – I don't want to treat anybody differently than anyone else. So we set up a careful, theft proof system to count, record and deposit tithes that did not involve me, and a careful system of purchase orders to watch diligently the out go as well. Every penny at Calvary Chapel is carefully accounted for, and used only very sparingly as the Lord directs. Even in minor purchases, we always ask, (a) do we really need it? And (b) is this the best?

5. The Greatest in the Kingdom Must Learn to Be the Servant of All. (See Mt. 18:1-4, 23:11; Mk 9; Lk. 9; Lk. 22)

The way up is down. If you would stand tall in God's church, you must learn to be on your face before Him. The Lord's way is exactly the opposite of the world's way. It saddens me to see flow charts in churches. If we must have a flow chart, stand it on its end. God's order is an inverted pyramid. The "higher up" you go, the more people you have the opportunity of serving.

God Incarnate, the Creator of the universe, the Almighty God, girded Himself with a towel (John 13), knelt down, and did the work of a slave by washing His disciples' feet. Are we greater than our master?

Ministry means service. It means opening your eyes and seeing what needs doing and doing it. It means that we consider no task to be too low or common. If it needs doing, do it, don't get others to do it, don't hire a staff to do it, do it yourself. If there's trash, pick it up. If a light's out, change it. If the nursery is short of help, baby-sit.

Motivated by love for God's people, it is our calling to serve them, to make them happy and comfortable, to bless them. I once went to Israel with Pastor Chuck and a group from the church. He led the tour, taught 4 or 5 Bible studies on location each day, and spent the night running medicine to this room, encouraging that person, helping this other one. If we're above any of that, we're not servants of the Lord.

Every minister at Calvary Chapel lives a very simple life style. Once you're standard of living is above your people you are no longer a servant.

Some people aspire to ministry but won't lift a finger to help out in practical ways. Others are willing to help if you specifically tell them what to do. Both drive me crazy. A true minister is a servant, a voluntary daily slave of the people; he sees what needs doing, and he does it. The fields are white unto harvest, but the laborers are few. The self appointed clergymen who want prestige are many, but workers, laborers, true servants are few. That's what Jesus said to pray for more of.

In all my life, I have never met anyone who is more of a servant than Chuck Smith. You can find him installing urinals in a new building in the middle of the night, picking up trash at the conference center, crawling in an attic to fix a leaky pipe, in the parking lot jump starting someone's car, baby-sitting children, always helping, always blessing others. Why does he do it? Because he loves God and loves His people.

You never out grow service. It's not something you do until the church is big enough to get others to do it. The greatest in the Kingdom is the servant of all. Gayle Erwin's ministry is a dynamic presentation of this principle; but Gayle lives it, he doesn't just teach it.

6. Minister to Others; Don't Try to Get Them to Minister to You. (See John 13 and 14:13)

So many people in ministry today, especially those on radio and television, spend most of their time trying to get the people to minister to them, rather than ministering to the people. It may be an effort to get the people of God to send them more money, or it may be a pastor angrily accusing his board of not taking care of him, or it may be a subtle manipulation so others will praise or encourage us. As ministers it is not our responsibility to seek anything for ourselves, God will take care of all that. He'll supply our financial needs; He'll meet our emotional needs. It is our responsibility to die to self, and care for others.

Near the end of his life, General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, sent a message to his co-laborers that contained nothing except the word "others". That was the essence of his life. Live for others, not self. Seek the good of those God has sent you. Seek to bless, not be blessed, to love, not be loved, to care for, not be cared for, to minister to others, not have them minister to you.

Feed the flock of God with the pure Word of Life. Serve them in love. Give. Live for the sheep; if necessary, die for the sheep. You are a shepherd, and that's what shepherds do.

If you're in the ministry to get your own needs met, either repent, or quit. Jesus is looking for people with hearts for the sheep. He sees the people scattered, bruised, bleeding, dying, ravaged by the wolf, and His heart breaks for them, He longs to enfold them in His love.

As pastors and ministers, that is our calling, to enfold the sheep in the loving arms of Jesus. I have personally known Chuck and Kay Smith for twenty years, and they have both always led me past themselves and into the arms of Jesus.

Minister to others. Lead them into the arms of Christ. He is the loving, great, and beautiful Shepherd

7. Sheep Beget Sheep (See John 15:16)

The whole Calvary Chapel movement started with Chuck and Kay Smith sitting near the ocean at Huntington Beach praying fervently together for the lost young people that were all around. If we are walking with the Lord, it is essential that we have a heart for the lost, a deep and burning, unquenchable desire to see the lost evangelized and missions throughout the globe. Our zeal for missions and evangelism should be deep. Our congregations must catch the vision to reach the lost and be involved directly in missionary work, and evangelism.

Beware, however, of mission and evangelism programs and gimmicks. As pastors, our primary responsibility is to feed His sheep – the Christians – in order that they might do the work of the ministry (see Ephesians 4). If we are feeding the flock the pure Word of God, verse-by-verse study of the whole counsel of God, they will be healthy. And healthy sheep will automatically and naturally reproduce without the artificial aid of programs. Healthy sheep share their faith, they have a burden for missions, and they seek the lost. We do not have to pump them up or push them, it flows naturally. Feed the flock and it will reproduce.

Mission programs, outreaches of evangelistic nature, social help and relief are all vital, but they are by-products, they are the fruit of solid Bible teaching, not ends in themselves. You'll never find peace by pursuing it, it is only found in Jesus, find Him and you'll have peace as a by-product. Similarly, you'll never build a missions program by seeking it directly (at least not one that God's in). Feed His people, and missions will be part of the fruit.

And where does it start? With prayer. Get together to pray for the lost. Seek God's face that He might give you souls for your hire.

8. Be Submissive and Loyal (See Titus 3)

The men God had raised up to help Moses helped him best when they stood by his side and held up his arms. That is our responsibility towards those God has placed over us. Here at Calvary Chapel Bible College and Conference Center, it is my calling, my responsibility, and my duty to assist my pastor. Chuck Smith is the director of this ministry; he is the shepherd whom God has charged with overseeing this ministry. My job is to ease his burden, to make his job lighter, to hold up his arms, to help him in any way that needs doing.

My job is to pray for my pastor daily, to encourage him if I can, to give him lots of data so he knows everything that's going on, so that he's never surprised by anything, to give him input and opinion, to support him and help him. Pastor Chuck doesn't want or need a yes man who nods dumbly at everything. But on the other hand, he doesn't need some independent cowboy seeking to build his own kingdom.

God has placed somebody over you. Submit to him. Love him. Pray for him. Help him. Above all, always be loyal. Never betray those with whom you minister. Never ever, backbite or criticize publicly. Never gossip or be a talebearer.

If there is something you can't live with in a ministry, quietly leave. Never try to build your own ministry on another man's foundation. Touch not the Lord's anointed. If he's off the wall, God will deal with him; who are we to criticize another man's servant?

Never cause strife or division. Help, encourage, submit, lighten the load, and assist. Don't try to be a star. Serve God by serving the man God has placed you under. If I'm doing my job right, Pastor Chuck will never have to worry about this part of the ministry because he'll know that it is running just exactly as it would if he had the time to be here and do it all personally. The only reason he hired me is because he doesn't have time to do it all. If he did, he'd do it himself. It is his ministry, I need to guide it just as he would.

I've heard people say that Pastor Chuck is hard to work for. Let's go on record that that is simply not true. If you have a heart for God's people, are a servant, and are willing to put sincere effort into your service, you'll never have trouble with Pastor Chuck.

9. Emphasize What God Has Done for us, Not What We Can Do for God. (See Rom.8)

Grace, the unmerited favor of God towards those who deserve the opposite, is the heart of the Gospel. It is grace we must teach, and grace we must live in the ministry. So many pastors continually emphasize what the people need to do for God – give more money, pray more, study more, and volunteer more. The genius of Pastor Chuck’s ministry is to emphasize rather what God has already done for us: Jesus loves us, He died for us, He rose from the grave, He ascended to the right hand of the Father where He ever lives to make intercession for us, He prays for us daily, His thoughts toward us are continually thoughts of blessing and love, He has forgiven us all our sins, He is always with us to help and guide, He has empowered us with His Holy Spirit, He is preparing an eternal abode for us.

Teach the people what God has already done for them, and their hearts will overflow in love and gratitude; gratitude that will manifest itself in loving service and devoted prayer.

Lead your people past yourself and into the arms of Jesus. They need Him, not you. At one point in my ministry, I got overwhelmed with a huge counseling load; then I realized I was training the people to rely on me, rather than the Lord. I repented of the sin, and started to emphasize His loving grace, letting them see Jesus clearly.

Seeing Jesus clearly should be the goal of every service, every study, every gathering. Our goal at Calvary Chapel Bible College is for every man and woman to know Jesus better when they finish than they did when they started. Our goal for the Conference Center is for every person who attends a retreat here to know Jesus better when they leave this mountain than they did when they came up. We want every student, every retreator, every room renter, every staff person, every visitor, to see Jesus clearly shining through us, to know His love and grace, and to get to know Him better.

Emphasize what God has done for us, not what we can do for Him.

10. Feed, Don’t Beat, the Sheep (See John 21:15-19)

When I was a young pastor, I used to think Jesus said, “Peter if you love Me, beat my sheep”. And I did a good job. I rebuked everything and everybody from the pulpit with the fire of an Old Testament prophet. And the people loved it. They were so used to being beat up on that they thought they weren’t spiritual if they left church feeling any way but miserable.

Moses was not allowed by God to enter the Promised Land because he misrepresented the Lord. He gave the people the impression God was mad at them when He wasn't. Moses beat the rock in anger, and therefore, never tasted a grape in Canaan.

We must be very careful not to misrepresent God. He's not mad at these folks, and if we are, we need to get back in touch with the Lord.

Feed God's people. Teach them the Word of God. Speak the truth in love. Share the pure Word of God in love.

As a young pastor, I would often preach at those who weren't there. If four people showed up for a mid-week service, I'd rant and rave (with plenty of proof tests) about diligence and commitment. I was talking to the ones who weren't there, not to the four faithful sheep who were. Pastor Chuck taught me to forget about who's not there and lovingly feed those who are. It was then that the ministry started to grow.

Guard your heart, watch your motive. The only legitimate motive is love. That is why we teach, that is why we preach, that is why we worship, and that is why we serve.

If you love Jesus, feed His sheep.

11. Present the Word of God in a Loving, Relaxed, Relevant Manner. (See John 15 and Jer. 3:15)

I grew up hearing preachers that either put me to sleep or yelled at me. They put me to sleep because their messages were not relevant to my life. They yelled at me and fed my guilt without showing me the love and freedom of Christ.

"Line upon line" is the way God speaks to His people. Topical sermons are a scattered unbalanced diet. Sheep don't grow well on topical sermons. Pastor Chuck has taught us to feed the sheep – to teach line upon line, verse-by-verse through the books of the Bible. Doing so keeps us balanced. We don't get off on pet doctrines; we cover the whole counsel of God. The people get fed. They grow. They produce fruit for God's glory. God is seeking for pastors who will feed His people, who will teach them verse-by-verse and stick to what the Bible actually says without adding to it.

Stay current on political affairs. Keep the studies relevant. Scatter throughout your Bible studies information on prophecy, the political climate, social

problems, evidence for creation, etc. Read the magazines and newspapers...be informed.

Present the Word of God in a relaxed manner where anyone will feel welcome, even those from different church backgrounds or of varying ages. It's no secret why so many of us hippies wound up at Calvary Chapel – it was the only place that accepted us just as we were. They accepted us and we accepted Jesus. Someone recently wrote me a letter saying that they thought it a shame that Calvary had lowered its standards to let me in. Praise God, this ministry is still lowering its standards to let sinners saved by grace of all kinds in.

While we believe in the informality of worship, it is equally important to keep our services respectful, to do things decently and in order, and with dignity. Depending on the community in which you live, that may even mean wearing a suit and tie on Sunday morning! (Chuck does).

12. Worship is Vital (See Eph. 5:18,19)

At Calvary Chapel, great emphasis is given to music and worship. Worship is not just a warm up for the sermon; it is actually and literally entering into the Holiest of All, coming through the gates with thanksgiving and the courts with praise. Jesus said the Father was seeking those who would worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Way back in the early days of Calvary Chapel there was a sign out front that said "Jesus Christ is Lord, adore Him with us". That's true worship – adoring Jesus.

We like to stay away from performance type music where the congregation is just watching others worship, in favor of participatory worship that everyone can enter in to.

We also like to emphasize songs to Jesus, rather than just songs about Jesus. We are singing to Him, adoring Him, loving Him. We are not just filling space until the latecomers get seated.

You can always tell a church that is moving with the Lord. The sanctuary fills up early, people love to sit up in the front row, and they sing with all their hearts.

True, heart felt, Spirit filled worship is vital and essential.

13. Be Balanced Theologically (See I Tim. 4:16. II Tim. 2:23-26)

Pastor Chuck has always sought to avoid those issues which do nothing but divide the Body of Christ, and, as he once said, “when Christ’s Body is divided, pray tell, who bleeds?”

Calvary Chapel is unique in the world today because it fills a gap that other churches do not.

On one side of the spectrum, there is an extreme form of Pentecostalism with its emotional expression of “charismania”, an emphasis on gifts of the Spirit to the expense of the Word of God. On the other end of the spectrum is fundamentalism with its opposition to gifts of the Spirit. At Calvary we believe in and allow for the operation of all the gifts of the Spirit, but always decently and in order. We believe that the Holy Spirit never interrupts Himself, so tongues or prophecies are not allowed while the Word is being taught, for Example. Calvary Chapel is the balance between Pentecostalism and fundamentalism.

On another spectrum, there are the hyper-Calvinists who teach that Jesus died only for His elect, that man has no free will, that one group is elect for heaven, another is elect for hell, and there’s nothing you can do about it. Opposite them are the hyper-Armenians who forget the sovereignty of God altogether and believe a person must be born again each time they sin. Again, Calvary Chapel is the balance between the two. As Pastor Chuck said: “ I believe in once saved always saved, if you abide in Christ”. The Bible teaches the security of the believer and the perseverance of the saints. We will never intellectually reconcile the two; we just need to accept the fact that God is bigger than we are and teach all that the Bible says.

There are other areas where we tend to get out of balance. Some groups preach pro-life to the expense of the gospel. Others mix in so much psychology that the Scriptures are forgotten. Stay balanced. Stay true to the Word of God.

14. Get Your People Praying and Keep Them Praying (See I Sam. 12:23; Lk. 21:36; Mt. 6)

Jesus said that men ought to always pray and not faint. Samuel said it would be a sin against God to stop praying for the people. Paul prayed wholeheartedly for the Philippians.

Prayer is the lifeblood of the ministry. The church moves forward on its knees. Every successful ministry has had dedicated prayer warriors behind it.

Be creative. Get the people praying. Use prayer letters, prayer rooms, elders meetings, whatever. Get them praying. Then, keep them praying. Prayer is not a means to convince God to give us what we want, it is a means by which we can participate in His will. It is the channel through which He works. Prayer moves the heart of God.

Saturate your ministry in prayer. Lord teach us to pray.

15. When You're Confronted With That Which You do not Understand, Fall Back on What You do Understand. (See Pro. 3:5,6)

Pastor Chuck told me the statement above when my oldest son died. We are often in life confronted with things we do not understand. As a young pastor, I had all the answers, there was nothing I didn't understand. But, now I know that there is much I do not know.

People often come to us with unanswerable questions. Why did God allow this? Why is this happening? Our best response is to simply say we do not know, but there are things we do know. We do know that God is love. We know that our sins are forgiven. We know that Jesus will never leave us. We know that we're headed for heaven. We know His Word is true.

When you're confronted with something you don't understand, fall back on what you do understand.

Be real and honest with folks. Don't pretend to be something you're not or know something you don't. Don't pretend to have all the answers. Be yourself. Love God and love His people.

There is a great deal we do not know. But, on the other hand, God has revealed to us in His word all we really need to know for this life. Quiet yourself, humble yourself, and stay in the Word of God. Declare His revelation to others, not your own speculations and philosophic musings.

16. Be a Shepherd Not a Hireling (See John 14-16, the Pastoral Epistles)

Make your people the best fed, best loved sheep on earth. The greatest gift of all is love. At one point in his ministry, Pastor Chuck was praying for gifts of the Spirit, and the Lord spoke to him and told him that He had already given him the greatest gift of all – the gift of love.

The high priest bore on his breast the stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel. Paul carried the believers on his heart. Carry the people of God on your heart. Love them. Serve them. Have their best interest at heart in all things.

The shepherd gives his life for the flock. Sacrifice self. Die to fleshly ambition. Serve the saints of God with love. Serve. Give. Minister. Care for people. Love them. Love them. Love them. Feed them the pure Word of God.

The hireling seeks his own welfare. He's a man pleaser. He's in it for the prestige, or the position, or the money, or to get his own needs met. When the going gets tough, he runs, he quits, he gives up.

Don't quit. Don't give up. Of course it's hard sometimes. Chuck and Kay spent 17 years pastoring little tiny churches, they brushed their teeth in the backyard because they didn't have indoor plumbing. Chuck and his brother Paul slept in their car as they traveled about preaching and witnessing. Hang in there. Persevere. God has called you. Labor as unto Him.

Die to self and lovingly feed the flock verse-by-verse Bible studies. Love them, they're His sheep. Make them the best fed, best loved sheep on earth.

17. God is more interested in the minister than the ministry. (See John 21:20-25)

The reason God has you in ministry is because He loves you. He really doesn't need your expertise or skill. He could raise up rocks to preach if He wanted.

No, He doesn't need us, but He wants us. He wants to fellowship with us, deeply, personally, intimately, and continually. He wants your heart, not just your service.

Your personal fellowship with Jesus is vital. Spend time in prayer and the Word – not to study for sermons, just to know God. Knowing Him is far more important than serving Him. Knowing Him is the reason you exist, and the reason Jesus redeemed you with His precious blood on the Cross.

“Christianity is like measles”, Pastor Chuck used to say, and “you have to have it to give it away.” You can never lead your people closer to Christ than you are. You can't impart what you don't have.

Be a man of prayer. Be a man of the Word. Be a man who walks with Jesus like Enoch did. Be a man after God's own heart like David.

Jesus, draw us nearer, take us deep into your heart of love. Jesus lives in your heart, now live in His.